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ANTICIPATIONS: AN EXPERIMENT IN PROPHECY.—II.

BY H. G. WELLS.

IV. CERTAIN SOCIAL REACTIONS.

THE business of this paper is to point out and consider certain general ways in which the various factors and elements described in the preceding article will react one upon another, and to speculate what definite statements, if any, it may seem reasonable to make about the people of the year 2000 (or thereabouts), from the reaction of these classes we have attempted to define.

To begin with, it may prove convenient to speculate upon the trend of development of that class about which we have the most grounds for certainty in the coming time. The shareholding class, the rout of the Abyss, the speculator, may develop in countless ways, according to the varying development of exterior influences upon them; but of the most typical portion of the central body, the section containing the scientific engineering or scientific medical sort of people, we can postulate certain tendencies with some confidence. Certain ways of thought they must develop, certain habits of mind and life they will radiate out into the adjacent portions of the social mass. We can even, I think, deduce some conception of the home in which a fairly typical example of this body will be living within a reasonable term of years.

The mere fact that a man is an engineer or a doctor, for example, should imply now, and it certainly will imply in the future, that he has received an education of a certain definite type; he will have a general acquaintance with the scientific interpretation of the universe, and he will have acquired certain positive and practical habits of mind. If the methods of thought of any individual in this central body are not practical and positive,

he will tend to drift out of it to some more congenial employment. He will, almost necessarily, have a strong imperative to duty, quite apart from whatever theological opinions he may entertain, because, if he has not such an inherent imperative, life, as I shall point out, will have very many more alluring prospects than this. His religious conclusions, whatever they may be, will be based upon some orderly, theological system that must have honestly admitted and reconciled his scientific beliefs; the emotional and mystical elements in his religion will be subordinate or absent. Essentially, he will be a moral man—certainly so far as to exercise self-restraint and live in an ordered way. Unless this is so, he will be unable to give his principal energies to thought and work—that is, he will not be a good typical engineer. If sensuality appear at all largely in this central body, therefore—a point we must leave open here—it will appear, without any trappings of sentiment or mysticism, frankly on Pauline lines—wine for the stomach's sake, and it is better to marry than to burn, a concession to the flesh necessary to secure efficiency. Assuming, in our typical case, that pure indulgence does not appear or flares and passes, then either he will be single or more or less married. The import of that "more or less" will be discussed later; for the present, we may very reasonably conceive him married upon the traditional laws of Christendom. Having a mind considerably engaged, he will not have the leisure for a wife of the distracting, perplexing personality kind; and in our typical case, which will be a typically sound and successful case, we may picture him wedded to a healthy, intelligent and loyal person, who will be her husband's companion in their common leisure, and, as mother of their three or four children and manager of his household, as much of a technically capable individual as himself. He will be a father of several children, I think, because his scientific mental basis will incline him to see the whole of life as a struggle to survive; he will recognize that a childless, sterile life, however pleasant, is essentially failure and perversion; and he will conceive his honor involved in the possession of offspring.

Such a couple will probably dress with a view to a decent convenience; they will not set the fashions, as I shall presently point out, but they will incline to steady and sober them; they will avoid exciting color contrasts and bizarre contours. They will not be habitually promenaders, or greatly addicted to theatrical

performances; they will probably find their secondary interests—the cardinal ones will, of course, be the work in hand—in a not too imaginative prose literature, in travel and journeys, and in the less sensuous aspects of music. They will probably take a considerable interest in public affairs.

They will probably not keep a servant for two very excellent reasons—because, in the first place, they will not want one, and, in the second, they will not get one, if they do. A servant is necessary in the small modern house, partly to supplement the deficiencies of the wife, but mainly to supplement the deficiencies of the house. She comes to cook and to perform various skilled duties that the wife lacks either knowledge or training, or both, to perform regularly and expeditiously. Usually, it must be confessed, the servant in the small household fails to perform these skilled duties completely. But the great proportion of the servant's duties consists merely in drudgery, that the stupidities of our present-day method of house construction entail, and which the more sanely constructed house of the future will avoid. Consider, for instance, the wanton disregard of avoidable toil displayed in building houses with a *sérvice* basement without lifts! Then, most dusting and sweeping would be quite avoidable if houses were wiselier done. It is the lack of proper warming appliances which necessitates a vast amount of coal carrying and dirt distribution, and it is this dirt, mainly, that has so painfully to be removed again. The house of the future will probably be warmed in its walls from some power-generating station, as, indeed, already very many houses are lit at the present day. The lack of sane methods of ventilation, also, enhances the general dirtiness and dustiness of the present-day home, and gas lighting and the use of tarnishable metals, wherever possible, involve further labor. But air will enter the house of the future through proper tubes in the walls, which will warm it and capture its dust, and it will be spun out again by a simple mechanism. So one great lump of the servant's toil will disappear. Two others are already disappearing. In many houses there are still the offensive duties of filling lamps and blacking boots to be done. Our coming house, however, will have no lamps; and, as for boots, really intelligent people will feel the essential ugliness of wearing the evidence of constant manual toil upon their persons. They will wear sorts of shoes and boots that can be cleaned by wiping

in a minute or so. Take now the bedroom work. The lack of ingenuity in sanitary fittings at present forbids the obvious convenience of hot and cold water supply to the bedroom, and there is a mighty fetching and carrying of water and slops to be got through daily; but all that will cease. Every bedroom will have its own bath-dressing room, which one will use and leave without the slightest disarrangement. This, so far as "upstairs" goes, really leaves only bed-making for bedrooms, and a bed does not take five minutes to make. Downstairs, a vast amount of needless labor at present arises out of table ware. "Washing up" consists of a tedious cleansing and wiping of each table utensil in turn, whereas it should be possible to immerse all dirty table ware in a suitable solvent for a few minutes, and then run that off for the articles to dry. The application of solvents to window cleaning, also, would be a possible thing, but for the primitive construction of our windows, which prevents anything but a painful rub, rub, rub with the leather. A friend of mine in domestic service tells me that this rubbing is to get the window dry, and that seems to be the general impression, but I think it incorrect. The water is not an adequate solvent, and enough cannot be used under existing conditions. Consequently, if the window is cleaned and left wet, it dries in drops, and these drops contain dirt in solution which remains as spots. But water, containing a suitable solvent, could be made to run quite simply down a window for a few minutes, from pinholes in a pipe above into a groove below, and this could be followed by pure rain water for an equal time; and, in this way, the whole window cleaning in the house could, I imagine, be reduced to the business of turning on a tap. There remains the cooking. To-day, cooking with its incidentals is a very serious business; the coaling, the ashes, the horrible moments of heat, the hot, black things to handle, the silly, vague recipes, the want of neat apparatus, and the want of intelligence to demand or use neat apparatus. One always imagines a cook working with a crimsoned face and bare, blackened arms. But with a neat little range, heated by electricity, and provided with thermometer, with absolutely controllable temperatures and proper heat screens, cooking might very easily be made a pleasant amusement for intelligent invalid ladies. Which reminds one, by the bye, as an added detail to our previous sketch of the scenery of the days to come, that there will be no chimneys at all

to the house of the future of this type, except the flue for the kitchen smells.

I do not know how long all these things will take to arrive. The erection of a series of experimental labor-saving houses by some philanthropic person, for exhibition and discussion, would certainly bring about a very extraordinary advance in domestic comfort, even in the immediate future, but the fashions in philanthropy do not trend in such practical directions; if they did, the philanthropic person would probably be too amenable to flattery to escape the pushful patentee, and too sensitive to avail himself of criticism (which rarely succeeds in being both penetrating and polite); and it will probably be many years before the cautious enterprise of advertising firms approximates to the economies that are theoretically possible to-day. But, certainly, the engineering and medical sorts of person will be best able to appreciate the possibilities of cutting down the irksome labors of the contemporary home, and most likely first to secure them.

The wife of this ideal home may probably have a certain distaste for vicarious labor, that, so far as the immediate minimum of duties goes, will probably carry her through them. There will be few servants obtainable for the small homes of the future, and that may strengthen her sentiments. Hardly any woman seems to object to a system of things which provides that another woman should be made rough-handed and kept rough-minded for her sake; but with the enormous diffusion of levelling information that is going on, a perfectly valid objection will probably come from the other side in this transaction. The servants of the past and the only good servants of to-day are the children of servants, or the children of the old labor base of the social pyramid, until recently a necessary and self-respecting element in the State. Machinery has smashed that base and scattered its fragments; the tradition of self-respecting inferiority is being utterly destroyed in the world. The contingents of the Abyss, even, will not supply daughters for this purpose. In the Northern of the United States, no native-born race of white servants has appeared, and the emaciated young negress degenerates towards the impossible—which is one of the many stimulants to small ingenuities that may help very powerfully to give that nation the industrial leadership of the world. The servant of the future, if, indeed, she should still linger in the small household, will be a per-

son alive to a social injustice, and the unsuccessful rival of the wife. Such servants as wealth will retain will be about as really loyal and servile as hotel waiters, and on the same terms. For the middling sort of people in the future, maintaining a separate *ménage*, there is nothing for it but the practically automatic house or flat, supplemented by the restaurant or the hotel.

Almost certainly, for reasons detailed in the previous paper of these Anticipations, this household, if it is an ideal type, will be situated away from the central "town" nucleus and in pleasant surroundings. And I imagine that the sort of woman who would be mother and mistress of such a home would not be perfectly content unless there were a garden about the house. On account of the servant difficulty, again, it would probably be less laboriously neat than any of our gardens to-day—no bedding out, for example, and a certain parsimony of mown lawn.

To such a type of home, it seems, the active, scientifically trained people will tend. And usually, I think, the prophet is inclined to overestimate the number of people who will reach this condition of affairs in a generation or so, and to underestimate the conflicting tendencies that will make its attainment difficult to all and impossible to many, and that will tint and blotch the achievement of those who succeed with patches of unsympathetic and antagonistic color. To understand just how modifications may come in, it is necessary to consider the probable line of development of another of the four main elements in the social body of the coming time. As a consequence and visible expression of the great new growth of share and stock property, there will be scattered through the whole social body, concentrated here, perhaps, and diffused there, but everywhere perceived, the members of that new class of the irresponsible wealthy, a class, as I have already pointed out in the preceding paper, miscellaneous and free to a degree quite unprecedented in any class in the world's history. Quite inevitably, great sections of this miscellany will develop characteristics almost diametrically opposed to those of the typical, working expert class, and their gravitation may influence the lives of this more efficient, finally more powerful, but at present much less wealthy class to a very considerable degree of intimacy.

The rich shareholder and the skilled expert must necessarily be sharply contrasted types, and of the two, it must be borne in

mind, it is the rich shareholder who spends the money. While occupation and skill incline one towards severity and economy, leisure and unlimited means involve relaxation and demand the adventitious interest of decoration. The shareholder will be the decorative influence in the state. So far as there will be a typical shareholder's house, we may hazard that it will have rich colors, elaborate hangings, stained glass, adornments and added interests in great abundance. This "leisure class" will certainly employ the greater proportion of the artists, decorators, fabric makers and the like of the coming time. It will dominate the world of art—and we may say, with some confidence, that it will influence it in certain directions. For example, standing apart from the movement of the world, as they will do to a very large extent, the archaic, opulently done, will appeal irresistibly to very many of these irresponsible rich, as the very quintessence of art. They will come to art with uncritical, cultured minds, full of past achievements, ignorant of present necessities. Art will be something added to life—something stuck on and richly reminiscent—not a manner pervading all real things. We may be pretty sure that very few will grasp the fact that an iron bridge or a railway engine may be artistically done—these will not be "art" objects, but hostile novelties. And, on the other hand, we can pretty confidently foretell a spacious future, and much amplification for that turgid, costly and deliberately anti-contemporary group of styles of which William Morris and his associates have been the fortunate pioneers. And the same principles will apply to costume. A non-functional class of people cannot have a functional costume; the whole scheme of costume, as it will be worn by the wealthy classes in the coming years, will necessarily be of that character which is called fancy dress. Few people will trouble themselves to discover the most convenient forms and materials, and endeavor to simplify them and reduce them to beautiful forms; while endless enterprising tradesmen will be alert for a perpetual succession of striking novelties. The women will ransack the ages for becoming and alluring anachronisms, the men will appear in the elaborate uniforms of "games," in modifications of court dress, in picturesque revivals of national costumes, in epidemic fashions, of the most astonishing sort.

Now, these people, so far as they are spenders of money, and so far as he is a spender of money, will stand to this ideal

engineering sort of person, who is the vitally important citizen of a progressive scientific state, in a competitive relation. In most cases, whenever there is something that both want, one against the other, the shareholder will get it; in most cases, where it is a matter of calling the time, the shareholder will call the time. For example, the young architect, conscious of exceptional ability, will have more or less clearly before him the alternatives of devoting himself to the novel, intricate and difficult business of designing cheap, simple and mechanically convenient homes for people who will certainly not be highly remunerative, and will probably be rather acutely critical, or of perfecting himself in some period of romantic architecture, or striking out some startling and attractive novelty of manner or material which will be certain, sooner or later, to meet its congenial shareholder. Even if he hovers for a time between these alternatives, he will need to be a person not only of exceptional gifts, but, what is by no means a common accompaniment of exceptional gifts, exceptional strength of character, to take the former line. Consequently, for many years yet, most of the experimental buildings and novel designs that initiate discussion and develop the general taste will be done primarily to please the more originaive shareholders, and not to satisfy the demands of our engineer or doctor; and the strictly commercial builders who will cater for all but the wealthiest, engineers, scientific investigators and business men being unable to afford specific designs, will (amidst the disregarded curses of these more intelligent customers) still simply reproduce, in a cheaper and mutilated form, such examples as happen to be set. Practically, that is to say, the shareholder will buy up almost all the available architectural talent.

This modifies our conception of the outer appearance of that little house we imagined. Unless it happens to be the house of an exceptionally prosperous member of the utilitarian professions, it will lack something of the neat directness implicit in our description, something of that inevitable beauty that arises out of the perfect attainment of ends—for many years at any rate. It will almost certainly be tinted, it may even be saturated, with the second-hand archaic. The owner may object—but a busy man cannot stop his life-work to teach architects what they ought to know. It may be heated electrically, but it will have sham chimneys, in whose darkness, unless they are built solid, dust and

filth will gather. It may have automatic window-cleaning arrangements, but they will be hidden by cheap mullions. Just that shabby shirking of the truth of things that has given the world such stock-broker-in-armor affairs as the Tower Bridge and historical romance, will, I fear, worry the over-lucid mind in a great multitude of the homes that the opening half, at least, of this century will produce.

In quite a similar way, the shareholding body will buy up all the clever and more enterprising makers and designers of clothing and adornment; he will set the fashion of almost all ornament, in bookbinding and printing and painting, for example, furnishing, and, indeed, of almost all things that are not primarily produced "for the million," as the phrase goes. And when that sort of thing comes in, then, so far as the trained and intelligent type of man goes, for many years yet it will be simply a case of the nether instead of the upper millstone. Just how far the influence and contagion of the shareholding mass will reach into this imaginary household of non-shareholding efficient, and just how far the influence of science and mechanism will penetrate the minds and methods of the rich becomes really one of the most important questions with which these speculations will deal. For this argument, that he will perhaps be able to buy up the architect and the tailor and the decorator and so forth, is merely preliminary to the graver issue. It is just possible that the shareholder, to a very large extent, may—in a certain figurative sense, at least—buy up much of the womankind that would otherwise be available to constitute those severe, capable and probably by no means unhappy little establishments to which our typical engineers will tend, and so prevent many women from becoming the mothers of a regenerating world. The huge secretion of irresponsible wealth by the social organism is certain to affect the tone of thought of the entire feminine sex profoundly; the exact nature of this influence we may now consider.

The gist of this enquiry lies in the fact that, while a man's starting position in this world of to-day is entirely determined by the conditions of his birth and early training, and his final position is the slow, elaborate outcome of his own sustained efforts to live, a woman, from the age of sixteen onward, as the world goes now, is essentially adventurous, the creature of circumstances largely beyond her control and foresight. A virile man, though

he, too, is subject to accidents, may upon most points hope to plan and determine his life; the life of a woman is all accident. Normally, she lives in relation to some specific man; and, until that man is indicated, her preparation for life must be of the most tentative sort. She lives going nowhere, like a cabman on the crawl; and, at any time, she may find it open to her to assist some pleasure-loving millionaire to spend his millions, or to play her part in one of the many real, original and only derivatives of the former aristocratic "Society" that have developed themselves among independent people. Even if she is a serious and labor-loving type, some shareholder may tempt her with the prospect of developing her exceptional personality in ease and freedom, and in "doing good" with his money. With the continued growth of the shareholding class, the brighter-looking matrimonial chances, not to speak of the glittering opportunities that are not matrimonial, will increase. Reading is now the privilege of all classes; there are few secrets of etiquette that a clever lower-class girl will fail to learn; there are few such girls, even now, who are not aware of their wide opportunities, or at least their wide possibilities of luxury and freedom; there are still fewer who, knowing as much, do not let it affect their standards and conception of life. The whole mass of modern fiction written by women for women, indeed down to the cheapest novelettes, is saturated with the romance of *mésalliance*. And, even when the specific man has appeared, the adventurous is still not shut out of a woman's career. A man's affections may wander capriciously, and leave him but a little poorer or a little better placed; for the women they wander from, however, the issue is an infinitely graver one, and the serious wandering of a woman's fancy may mean the beginning of a new world. At any moment, the chances of death may make the wife a widow, may sweep out of existence all that she had made fundamental in her life, may enrich her with insurance profits or hurl her into poverty, and restore all the drifting expectancy of her adolescence.

Now, it is difficult to say why we should expect the growing girl, in whom unlimited ambition and egotism are as natural and proper as beauty and high spirits, to deny herself some dalliance with the more opulent dreams that form the golden lining to these precarious prospects. How can we expect her to prepare herself solely, putting all wandering thoughts aside, for the serv-

antless cookery, domestic kindergarten work, the care of hardy perennials, and low-pitched conversation of the engineer's home? Supposing, after all, there is no predestinate engineer! The stories the growing young girl now prefers, and, I imagine, will in the future still prefer, deal mainly with the rich and free; the theatre she will prefer to visit will present the lives and loves of opulent people, with great precision and detailed correctness; her favorite periodicals will reflect that life; her school-mistress, whatever her principles, must have an eye to her "chances." And, even after fate or a gust of passion has whirled her into the arms of our busy and capable fundamental man, all these things will still be in her imagination and memory. Unless he is a person of extraordinary mental prepotency, she will almost insensibly determine the character of the home in a direction quite other than that of our first sketch. She will set herself to realize, as far as her husband's means and credit permit, the ideas of the particular section of the wealthy that have captured her. If she is a fool, her ideas of life will presently come into complete conflict with her husband's, in a manner that, as the fumes of the love potion leave his brain, may bring the real nature of the case home to him. If he is of that resolute strain to whom this world must finally come, he may rebel, and wade through tears and crises to his appointed work again. The cleverer she is, and the finer and more loyal her character up to a certain point, the less likely this is to happen, the more subtle and effective will be her hold upon her husband, and the more probable his perversion from the austere pursuit of some interesting employment towards the adventures of modern money getting in pursuit of her ideals of a befitting life. And, meanwhile, since "one must live," the nursery, that was implicit in the background of the first picture, will probably prove unnecessary. She will be, perforce, a person not only of pleasant pursuits, but of leisure. If she endears herself to her husband, he will feel not only the attraction but the duty of her vacant hours; he will not only deflect his working hours from the effective to the profitable, but that occasional burning of the midnight oil that no brain-worker may forego if he is to retain his efficiency, will, in the interests of some attractive theatrical performance, or some agreeable social occasion, all too frequently have to be put off or abandoned.

This line of speculation, therefore, gives us a second picture

of a household to put beside our first—a household, or rather a couple, rather more likely to be typical of the mass of middling sort of people in these urban regions of the future, than our first projection. It will probably not live in a separate home at all, but in a flat in “town,” or at one of the subordinate centres of the urban region we have foreseen. The apartments will be more or less agreeably adorned, in some decorative fashion akin to, but less costly than, some of the many fashions that will obtain among the wealthy. They will be littered with a miscellaneous literature, novels of an entertaining and stimulating sort predominating, and with bric-a-brac—in a childless household there must certainly be quaint dolls, pet images and so forth, and perhaps a canary would find a place. I suspect there would be an edition or so of Omar about in this more typical household of “Modernes,” but I doubt about the Bible. The man’s working books would probably be shabby, and relegated to a small study, and even these overlaid by abundant copies of the *Financial*—something or other. It would still be a servantless household, and probably not only without a nursery, but without a kitchen; and, in its grade and degree, it would probably have social relations, directly or immediately through rich friends, with some section, some one of the numerous cults, of the quite independent wealthy.

Households quite similar to this would be even more common among those neither independent nor engaged in work of a primarily functional nature, but endeavoring quite ostensibly to acquire wealth by political or business ingenuity and activity; and also among the great multitude of artists, writers and that sort of people—whose works are their children. In comparison with the state of affairs fifty years ago, the child-infested household is already conspicuously rare in these classes.

These are two highly probable *ménages* among the central mass of the people of the coming time. But there will be many others. The *ménage à deux*, one may remark, though it may be without the presence of children, is not necessarily childless. Parentage is certainly part of the pride of many men—though, curiously enough, it does not appear to be felt among modern European married women as any part of their honor. Many men will probably achieve parentage, therefore, who will not succeed in inducing, or who may possibly even be very loath to permit, their wives to undertake at most more than the first beginnings of

motherhood. From the moment of its birth, unless it is kept as a pet, the child of such marriages will be nourished, taught and built up almost as though it were an orphan; it will have a succession of bottles and foster mothers for body and mind from the very beginning. Side by side with this increasing number of childless homes, therefore, there may develop a system of kindergarten boarding schools. Indeed, to a certain extent, such schools already exist, and it is one of the unperceived contrasts of this and any former time how common such a separation of parents and children becomes. Except in the case of the illegitimate and orphans and the children of impossible (many public-house children, for instance) or wretched homes, boarding schools, until quite recently, were used only for quite big boys and girls. But now, at every seaside town, for example, one sees a multitude of preparatory schools, which are really not simply educational institutions, but supplementary homes. In many cases, these are conducted and very largely staffed by unmarried girls and women, who are, indeed, in effect, assistant mothers. This class of capable schoolmistresses is one of the most interesting social developments of this period. For the most part, they are women who, from emotional fastidiousness, intellectual egotism, or an honest lack of passion, have refused the common lot of marriage, women often of exceptional character and restraint; and it is well that, at any rate, their intelligence and character should not pass fruitlessly out of being. Assuredly, for this type the future has much in store.

There are, however, still other possibilities to be considered in this matter. In these Anticipations, it is impossible to ignore the forces making for a considerable relaxation of the institution of permanent monogamous marriage in the coming years, and a much greater variety of establishments than is suggested by these possibilities within the pale. I guess, without attempting to refer to statistics, that our present society must show a quite unprecedented number and increasing number of male and female celibates—not religious celibates, but people, for the most part, whose standard of personal comfort has such relation to their earning power that they shirk or cannot enter the matrimonial grouping. The institution of permanent monogamous marriage—except in the ideal Roman Catholic community, where it is based on the sanction of an authority which in real Roman Catho-

lic countries a large proportion of the men decline to obey—is sustained at present entirely by the inertia of custom, and by a number of sentimental and practical considerations, considerations that may very possibly undergo modification in the face of the altered relationship of husband and wife that the present development of childless *ménages* is bringing about. The practical and sustaining reason for monogamy is the stability it gives to the Family; the value of a stable family lies in the orderly upbringing in an atmosphere of affection that it secures in most cases for its more or less numerous children. The monogamous family has indisputably been the civilizing unit of the pre-mechanical civilized state. It must be remembered that, both for husband and wife in most cases, monogamic life marriage involves an element of sacrifice; it is an institution of late appearance in the history of mankind; and it does not completely fit the psychology or physiology of any but very exceptional characters in either sex. For the man, it commonly involves considerable restraint; he must ride his imagination on the curb, or exceed the code in an extremely dishonoring, furtive and unsatisfactory manner, while publicly professing an impossible virtue. For the woman, it commonly implies many uncongenial submissions. There are probably few married couples who have escaped distressful phases of bitterness and tears, within the constraint of their, in most cases, practically insoluble bond. But, on the other hand, and as a reward that in the soberer, mainly agricultural civilization of the past, and among the middling class of people at any rate, has sufficed, there comes the great development of associations and tendernesses that arises out of intimate co-operation in an established Home, and particularly out of the linking love and interest of children's lives.

But how does this fit into the childless, disunited and probably shifting *ménage* of our second picture?

It must be borne in mind that it has been the middling and lower mass of people, the tenants and agriculturalists, the shopkeepers and so forth—men needing, before all things, the absolutely loyal help of wives—that has sustained permanent monogamic marriage whenever it has been sustained. Public monogamy has existed on its merits—that is, on the merits of the wife. Merely ostensible reasons have never sufficed. No sort of religious conviction, without a real practical utility, has ever availed to

keep classes of men, unhampered by circumstances, to its restrictions. In all times, and holding all sorts of beliefs, the specimen humanity of courts and nobilities is to be found developing the most complex qualifications of the code. In some quiet corner of Elysium, the bishops of the early Georges, the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the contemporary French and Spanish courts, the patriarchs of vanished Byzantium, will find a common topic with the spiritual advisers of the kingdoms of the East, in this difficult theme of the concessions permissible and expedient to earnest believers encumbered with leisure and a superfluity of power. It is not necessary to discuss religious development, therefore, before deciding this issue. We are dealing now with things deeper and forces more powerful than the mere convictions of men.

Will a generation for whom marriage will be no longer necessarily associated with the birth and rearing of children, or with the immediate co-operation and sympathy of husband and wife in common proceedings, retain its present feeling for the extreme sanctity of the permanent bond? Will the agreeable, unemployed, childless woman, with a high conception of her personal rights, who is spending her husband's earnings or income in some pleasant, discrepant manner—a type of woman there are excellent reasons for anticipating will become more frequent—will she continue to share the honors and privileges of the wife, mother and helper of the old dispensation? And, in particular, will the great gulf that is now fixed by custom between her and the agreeable, unmarried lady who is similarly employed, remain so inexorably wide? Charity is in the air, and why should not charming people meet one another? And are either of these ladies to find the support that will enable them to insist upon the monopoly that conventional sentiment, so far as it finds expression, concedes them? The danger to them of the theory of equal liberty is evident enough. On the other hand, in the case of the unmarried mother who may be helped to hold her own or who may be holding her own in the world, where will the moral censor of the year 1950 find his congenial following to gather stones? Much as we may regret it, it does very greatly affect the realities of this matter that, with the increased migration of people from home to home and the large urban regions that we have concluded will certainly obtain in the future, even if moral reprobation and minor social inconveniences do still attach to certain sorts of

status, it will probably be increasingly difficult to determine the status of people who wish to conceal it for any but criminal ends.

In another direction there must be a movement toward the relaxation of the marriage law and of divorce that will complicate status very confusingly. In the past, it has been possible to sustain several contrasting moral systems in each of the practically autonomous states of the world; but with a development and cheapening of travel and migration that is as yet only in its opening phase, an increasing conflict between dissimilar moral restrictions must appear. Even at present, with only the most prosperous classes of the American and Western European countries migrating at all freely, there is a growing amount of inconvenience arising out of these (from the point of view of social physiology) quite arbitrary differences. A man or woman may, for example, have been the injured party in some conjugal complication, may have established a domicile and divorced the erring spouse in certain of the United States, may have married again there with absolute local propriety, and may be a bigamist and a criminal in England. A child may be a legal child in Denmark or Australia, and a bastard in this austerer climate. These things are, however, only the first intimations of much more profound reactions. Almost all the great European Powers, and the United States also, are extending their boundaries to include great masses of non-Christian, polygamous peoples; and they are permeating these peoples with railways, printed matter and all the stimulants of our present state. With the spread of these conveniences, there is no corresponding spread of Christianity. These people will not always remain in the ring fence of their present regions; their superseded princes and rulers and public masters and managers will presently come to swell the shareholding mass of the appropriating Empire. Europeans, on the other hand, will drift into their districts and under the influence of their customs; intermarriages and interracial reaction will increase; in a world which is steadily abolishing locality, the compromise of local permission, of localized recognition of the "custom of the country," cannot permanently avail. Statesmen will have to face the alternative of either widening the permissible variations of the marriage contract, or of acute racial and religious stresses, of a vast variety of possible legal betrayals, and the appearance of a body of self-respecting people outside the law and public respect,

a body that will confer a touch of credit upon, because it will share the stigma of, the deliberately dissolute and criminal. And whether the moral law shrivels relatively by mere exclusiveness (as in religious matters the Church of England, for example, has shrivelled to the proportions of a mere sectarian practice), or whether it broadens itself to sustain justice in a variety of sexual contracts, the net result, so far as concerns our present purpose, will be the same. And all these forces, making for moral relaxation in the coming time, will probably be greatly enhanced by the line of development certain sections of the irresponsible wealthy will almost certainly follow.

Let me repeat that the shareholding rich man of the new time is in a position of freedom almost unparalleled in the history of men. He has sold his permission to control and experiment with the material wealth of the community for freedom—for freedom from care, labor, responsibility, custom, local usage and local attachment. He may come back again into public affairs if he likes—that is his private concern. Within the limits of the law and his capacity and courage, he may do as the imagination of his heart directs. Now, such an experimental and imperfect creature as man, a creature urged by such imperious passions, so weak in imagination and controlled by so feeble a reason, receives such absolute freedom as this only at infinite peril. To a great number of these people, in the second or third generation, this freedom will mean vice, the subversion of passion to inconsequent pleasures. We have on record, in the personal history of the Roman Emperors, how freedom and uncontrolled power took one representative group of men, men not entirely of one blood nor of one bias, but reinforced by the arbitrary caprice of adoption and political revolution. We have, in the history of the Russian Emperesses, a glimpse of similar feminine possibilities. We are moving towards a time when, through this confusion of moral standards I have foretold, the pressure of public opinion in these matters must be greatly relaxed, when religion will no longer speak with a unanimous voice, and when freedom of escape from disapproving neighbors will be greatly facilitated. In the past, when depravity had a centre about a court, the contagion of its example was limited to the court region, but every idle rich man of this great, various and widely diffused class will play, to a certain extent, the moral rôle of a court. In these days of universal read-

ing and vivid journalism, every infraction of the code will be known of, thought about, and more or less thoroughly discussed by an enormous and increasing proportion of the common people. In the past, it has been possible for the Churches to maintain an attitude of respectful regret toward the lapses of the great, and even to assist in these lapses with a seemly privacy, while maintaining a wholesome rigor towards vulgar vice. But, in the coming time, there will be no Great, but many rich; the middling sort of people will probably be better educated, as a whole, than the rich, and the days of their differential treatment are at an end.

It is foolish, in view of all these things, not to anticipate and prepare for a state of things when, not only will moral standards be shifting and uncertain, admitting of physiologically sound *ménages* of every variable status, but also when vice and depravity, in every form that is not absolutely penal, will be practised in every grade of magnificence and condoned. This means that not only will status cease to be simple and become complex and varied, but that, outside the system of *ménages* that are now recognized and under the disguise of which all other *ménages* shelter, there will be a vast drifting and unstable population grouped in almost every conceivable form of relation. The world of Georgian England was a world of Homes; the world of the coming time will still have its Homes, its real Mothers, the custodians of the human succession, and its cared for children, the inheritors of the future; but, in addition to this Home world, frothing tumultuously over and amidst these stable rocks, there will be this enormous complex of establishments and hotels and sterile households and flats, and all the elaborate furnishing and appliances of a luxurious extinction.

And since, in the present social chaos, there does not yet exist any considerable body of citizens—comparable to the agricultural and commercial middle class of England during the period of limited monarchy—that will be practically unanimous in upholding any body of rules of moral restraint; since there will probably not appear for some generations any body propounding, with wide-reaching authority, a new, definitely different code to replace the one that is now likely to be increasingly disregarded, it follows that the present code, with a few interlined qualifications and grudging legal concessions, will remain nominally operative in sentiment and practice, while being practically disregarded,

glossed over or replaced in numberless directions. It must be pointed out that, in effect, what is here forecast for questions of *ménage* and moral restraints has already happened to a very large extent in religious matters. There was a time when it was held—and I think rightly—that a man's religious beliefs, and particularly his method of expressing them, was a part not of his individual but of his social life; for surely no one can have any real right to promulgate nonsense affecting action. But the great upheavals of the Reformation resulted finally in a compromise, a sort of truce, that has put religious belief very largely out of intercourse and discussion. It is conceded that, within the bounds of the general peace and security, a man may believe and express his belief in matters of religion as he pleases; not because it is better so, but because, for the present epoch, there is no way nor hope of attaining unanimous truth. There is a decided tendency, that will, I believe, prevail, towards the same compromise in the question of private morals. There is a convention to avoid all discussion of creeds in general social intercourse; and a similar convention to avoid the point of status in relation to marriage, one may very reasonably anticipate, will be similarly recognized.

But this impending dissolution of a common standard of morals does not mean universal depravity until some great reconstruction obtains, any more than the obsolescence of the Conventicle Act means universal irreligion. It means that, for one Morality, there will be many moralities. Each human being will, in the face of circumstances, work out his or her particular early training as his or her character determines. And, although there will be a general convention upon which the most diverse people will meet, it will only be with persons who have come to identical or similar conclusions in the matter of moral conduct, and who are living in similar *ménages*, just as now it is only with people whose conversation implies a certain community or kinship of religious belief that really frequent and intimate intercourse will go on. In other words, there will be a process of moral segregation set up. Indeed, such a process is probably already in operation, amidst the deliquescent social mass. People will be drawn together into little groups of similar *ménages* having much in common. And this—in view of the considerations advanced in the preceding article of this series, considerations all converging on the practical abolition of distances and the general freedom

of people to live anywhere they like over large areas—will mean very frequently an actual local segregation. There will be districts that will be clearly recognized and marked as “nice,” fast regions; areas of ramshackle Bohemianism; regions of earnest and active work, old-fashioned corners and Hill Tops. Whole regions will be set aside for the purposes of opulent enjoyment—a thing already happening along the Riviera to-day.

People who live in the good hunting country and about the glittering Grand Stand, will no longer even pretend to live under the same code as those picturesque musical people who have concentrated on the canoe-dotted river. Where the promenaders gather, and the bands are playing, and the pretty little theatres compete, the pleasure seeker will be seeking such pleasure as he pleases, no longer debased by furtiveness and innuendo, going his primrose path to a congenial, picturesque, happy and highly desirable extinction. Just over the hills, perhaps, a handful of opulent shareholders will be pleasantly preserving the old traditions of a landed aristocracy, with servants, tenants, vicar and other dependents all complete; and what, from the point of view of social physiology, will really be an assorted contingent of the Abyss, but all nicely washed and done good to, will pursue home industries in model cottages in a quite old English and exemplary manner. Here the windmills will spin and the waterfalls be trapped to gather force, and the quiet-eyed master of the machinery will have his office and, perhaps, his private home. Here, about the great college and its big laboratories, there will be men and women reasoning and studying; and here, where the homes thicken among the ripe gardens, one will hear the laughter of children, the singing of children in their schools, and see their little figures going to and fro amidst the trees and flowers.

And these segregations, based primarily on a difference in moral ideas and pursuits and ideals, will probably round off and complete themselves at last as distinct and separate cultures. As the moral ideas realize themselves in *ménage* and habits, so the ideals will seek to find expression in a literature, and the passive drifting together will pass ever into a phase of more or less conscious and intentional organization. The segregating groups will develop fashions of costume, types of manners and bearing, and even perhaps be characterized by a certain type of facial expression. And this gives us a glimpse of a curious aspect of the

future of literature. The kingdoms of the past were little things; and above the mass of peasants, who lived and obeyed and died, there was just one little culture to which all must needs conform. Literature was universal within the limits of its language. Where difference of view arose, there were violent controversies, polemics and persecutions, until one or other rendering had won its ascendancy. But this new world into which we are passing will, for many generations at least, albeit it will be freely intercommunicating and like a whispering gallery for things outspoken, possesses no universal ideals, no universal conventions; there will be the literature, thought and effort of this sort of people, and the literature, thought and effort of that.* Life is already most wonderfully arbitrary and experimental, and for the coming century this must be its essential social history, a great drifting and unrest of people, a shifting and regrouping and breaking up again of groups, great multitudes seeking to find themselves.

The safe life in the old order, where one did this because it was right, and that because it was the custom, when one shunned this and hated that, as lead runs into a mould, all that is passing away. And presently, as the new century opens out, there will become more and more distinctly emergent many new cultures and settled ways. The gray expanse of life to-day is gray not in its essence, but because of the minute, confused mingling and mutual cancelling of many colored lives. Presently these lines and shades will gather together here as a mass of one color and there as a mass of another. And as these colors intensify and the tradition of the former order fades, as these cultures become

* Already this is becoming apparent enough. The literary "Boom," for example, affected the entire reading public of the early nineteenth century; it was a figure of speech that "everyone" was reading Byron, or puzzling about the Waverley mystery, that first and most successful use of the unknown author dodge. The booming of Dickens, too, forced him even into the reluctant hands of Omar's Fitzgerald. But the factory-syren voice of the modern "boomster" touches whole sections of the reading public no more than foghorns going down the Channel. One would as soon think of Skinner's Soap for one's library, as So and So's Hundred Thousand Copy Success. Instead of "everyone" talking of the Great New Book, quite considerable numbers are shamelessly admitting they don't read that sort of thing. One gets used to literary booms, just as one gets used to motor cars; they are no longer marvellous, universally significant things, but merely something that goes by with much unnecessary noise and leaves a faint offence in the air. Distinctly, we segregate. And while no one dominates, while, for all this bawling, there are really no great authors of imperial dimensions—indeed, no great successes to compare with the Waverley boom or the boom of Macaulay's History—many men, too fine, too subtle, too aberrant, too unusually fresh for any but exceptional readers, men who would probably have failed to get a hearing at all in the past, can now subsist quite happily with the little sect they have found, or that has found them. They live safely in their islands; a little while ago they could not have lived at all, and yet it is most often these very men who are most covetously bitter against the order of the present day.

more and more shaped and conscious, as the new literatures grow in substance and power, as differences develop from speculative matter of opinion to definite intentions, as contrasts and affinities grow sharper and clearer, there must follow some very extensive modifications in the collective public life. But one series of tints, one color, must needs have a heightening value amidst this iridescent display. While the forces at work in the wealthy and purely speculative groups of society make for disintegration, and in many cases for positive elimination, the forces that bring together the really functional people will tend more and more to impose upon them certain common characteristics and beliefs, and the discovery of a group of similar and compatible class interests upon which they can unite. The practical people, the engineering and medical and scientific people, will become more and more homogeneous in their fundamental culture, more and more distinctively aware of a common general reason in things, and of a common difference from the less functional masses and from any sort of people in the past. They will have, in their positive science, a common ground for understanding the real pride of life, the real reason for the incidental nastiness of vice; they will be a sanely reproductive class and, above all, an educating class. Just how much they will have kept or changed of the deliquescent morality of to-day, when in a hundred years or so they do distinctively and powerfully emerge, I cannot speculate now. They will certainly be a moral people. They will have developed the literature of their needs, they will have discussed and tested and thrashed out many things, they will be clear where we are confused, resolved where we are undecided and weak. In the districts of industrial possibility, in the healthier quarters of the town regions, apart from the swamps and away from the glare of the midnight lights, these people will be gathered together. They will be linked in professions through the agency of great and sober papers. The best of the wealthy will gravitate to their attracting centres. Unless some great catastrophe break down all that man has built, these great, kindred groups of capable men and educated, adequate women must be the element finally emergent amidst the vast confusion of the coming time.

H. G. WELLS.

(To be continued.)